

It is inconceivable that any governmental body might wish to depress real estate valuations that produce the taxes to provide necessary services.

But, the proposed measure regarding the reserve strip before us does just that.

1. The original action that launched the proposal stemmed from the cutting of trees on the reserve strip by one owner along the lakeside. As stated in the proposed ordinance, the DNR controls violations along the lakeside. Thus a new law to prevent tree cutting is not needed. Further, there is no emphasis on conservation measures assumed by the town that owns the strip in the proposed measure.

2. By dividing the development of the town into two time eras--before the map of the developers and after it existed, historical meaning is lost. Question: Whom is the strip reserved for?

In the era of the map, Colliers magazine gave away lots to the public in the area named Northwoods Beach by the developers. Thus, the real reason for the reserve strip--a concept that real estate developers fostered to encourage new owners of the free land to enjoy a lakeside beach. However, elevations of this imagined beach were not a factor on the map. Thus the fantasy of free land and easily accessible beach front lakeside to encourage development and an expanded tax role was born.

Most full-time residents on the strip still are asked for help in locating 30 or 60 foot lots from persons whose grandparents or parents have been paying taxes on "lakeside" adjacent lots. These people are invariably quite surprised by the elevation on the lakeside and the lack of a beach at the bottom by the water. The owners were led to believe by the magazine and developers that an expansive flat beach was nearby.

3. No pre-existing statutes have been cited for precedent of the proposed law. Do any exist? Earlier maps indicated no reserve strip.

Is the lack of codification of the strip the reason we are now presented with a complicated set of do's and don'ts on lists that will be retroactively applied to current owners?

The suggested fines are troubling in that they could be applied unevenly and personal grudges might be in play in using imposing fines in the future. In the past most of us had the city fathers walk on the land as we sought town and county legal permits to add homes to vacant lots or additions. In the 1967 lawsuit the goal was to add or maintain waterfront structures to permit year round improvements.

4. Lost in this discussion on the proposed law is the stress and unnecessary worry to current owners over implications of uneven application of the lists and fines and retroactive applications of a new law. Real estate valuations will undoubtedly be negatively impacted if owners cannot predict to future owners what may happen with a new group of elected officials who may change their minds seemingly without consulting home owners. Who wants to buy property like that?

In conclusion, the DNR is responsible for consultations on trees on the banks. Further, there is no practical way to reach the lake down a steep slope. There is no sand beach at the bottom beside the lake. The dreams of the developers on the oft cited map were an illusion to sell magazines and entice people to the Northwoods. Potential loss to real estate valuations is a real threat and could depress the town coffers.

Why a group of city fathers would intentionally insult and inflame a sizable group of law abiding citizens who pay hefty taxes is a mystery to us.

The proposal before you appears to be a law in search of a problem. After all, the concern of us all should be the protection and sustainability of the lakes. The current proposal appears to venture far afield from the conservation of the lakes.

We hope you will take our input seriously and not pass an ill conceived and potentially unenforceable measure. The current DNR's existing regulations and guidelines have been studied over long periods of time and provide adequate input for maintaining our lakes and lakeshores. They are also enforceable and should be enforced.

Sincerely,

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